

IBS

VOLUME 4

July 1982



# IRISH BIBLICAL STUDIES

Editor: Rev Professor E.A. Russell  
Union Theological College,  
Belfast BT7 1JT, N. Ireland

Associate Editor: Professor Ernest Best, The University  
Glasgow, G12 8QQ

Assistant Editor: Miss Anne McConnell,  
Union Theological College

Editorial Advisory Panel:

Professor D.W. Gooding, The Queen's University, Belfast  
Rev. Dr David Hill, The University, Sheffield  
Principal R.J. McKelvey, The Congregational College,  
Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8BP  
Rev Professor J.S. McIvor, Union Theological College  
Rev J. Murphy-O'Connor, L'Ecole Biblique, Jerusalem  
Rev J.S. McPolin, S.J., Milltown Park, Dublin 6  
Professor E. Nicholson, Oriel College, Oxford  
Principal V. Parkin, Edgehill College, Belfast  
Mr David Payne, The Queen's University, Belfast  
Professor Jacob Weingreen, Trinity College, Dublin 2

---

Subscriptions

All subscriptions should be sent to the Assistant  
Editor, and are payable only in Sterling

Subscriptions for 1982 (inclusive of postage):

Individuals	£5.50 Sterling (special rates for Ministers Emeriti, Ministers not yet five years ordained, and Theological Students)
Institutions	£7.50 Sterling

---



## Contents

J.R. Boyd, Faith, Social Structure and Theology: A Review	118-122
E.A. Russell, Divine Healing and Scripture	123-157
John Thompson, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: A Review	158-168
Reviews: John Goldingay, Approaches to OT Interpretation (J.P. Taylor); David John Lull, The Spirit in Galatia, (E.A. Russell); A.M. Hunter, Christ and the Kingdom (R.E.H. Uprichard) John P. Balchin, Let the Bible Speak (R.E.H. Uprichard)	169-176

Faith, Social Structure and Theology: A Review

J.R. Boyd

It may be that not all readers of this journal have had their attention so forcefully drawn to these three significant books /1 as to peruse them and respond to what is no less than a revolution in theological perspective. This comment will begin with the latest of the three, "Faith in Christ". Its subject is belief in the divine humanity of Christ in our society today. Other issues are dealt with more technically and substantially in the other two. Dr Gill has his doctorate (in Christology) from London University and his M.Soc.Sc from Birmingham University. This qualifies him most unusually to write from within each of the disciplines of theology and sociology. He lectures in the department of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology of Edinburgh University and is an ordained Anglican priest. He has come to believe that theology needs to take up into its system the serious regard for sociology that it has long had for history and philosophy. He sees theology as affected, and to some degree, determined by its social context; at the same time, society may be influenced, and to some extent determined by theology.

This small book, "Faith in Christ", is concerned, as he says, "with a single issue - namely, whether or not supposed changes in Western society require Christians to alter the way in which they have traditionally expressed their faith in Christ." Note the phrase, "supposed changes". If it is assumed (and the assumption becomes very general) that changes of attitude to the transcendent render it necessary to avoid mythical terms, then one must start "from below", with Jesus Christ, as the

---

1. The books are:

Robin Gill, Social Content of Theology, Mowbray 1975  
Theology and Social Structure, 1977  
Faith in Christ, 1978

---



outstanding human, rather than "from above", with him as the Son of God and incarnate revelation of the sovereign God. This is not the place to follow Gill's argument in detail. It is enough to state that, after showing the radical consequences of assuming such a thorough secularisation of society, he examines the views of those who give other religions a position similar to Christianity or who regard the Church as having declining weight in our society. He concludes that there is much more continuing debate on these issues and that they are far from settled. "Within recent years", we are told, "a group of scholars has argued, not that the process of religious decline in the West is being halted, but that it never existed at all." They find a remarkable persistence of religion generally and not least in the Western world. Gill does not go all the way with these views but notes a remarkable element of confusion as to whether attendance is an indicator of decline in religious faith when it decreases, or whether it may be merely the sorting out of those whose faith is nominal from those who are committed.

Again it has been thought obnoxious that "intolerant" claims by Christians should be pressed as to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ among the world's faiths. Yet in NT times, it was possible to "speak the truth in love" and nevertheless to make similar claims, at a time when there were many other faiths around. Disrespect for others and their views may take the shape of refusing to tell them the full story of what one believes, and is not to be equated with watering down the rich mixture of one's convictions sincerely held. It is well known that the forms which credal expression took in the early centuries of the Church can be directly related to the social and cultural conditions met at that time and with the contemporary controversies and circumstances of those days. Gill is therefore led to combine two approaches - "from below" and "from above" - as each having both strengths and weaknesses. "A faith which combines these two approaches could effectively eliminate their weaknesses.....A use of both approaches would seem to be more desirable than a use of either approach on its own."

In his earlier books, Gill was criticized on the ground that he related mainly ethical questions to sociological scrutiny and ignored more doctrinal aspects of theology. His deep concern is with the hermeneutical question. How can theologians (and those moved to faith, utterance or action by their thought) understand and be understood as clearly as possible in their social context? He urges "interaction" between those who aim at precise definition in theology and those whose concern is with sociological definition. His first book in the series aimed at developing a methodology whereby such mutual contact could be effected.

Gill's "Social Context of Theology" took shape at a time when secularisation was raging. It was a decade when the mass media brought to light in full colour all sorts of ideas which previously had often been thought unsuitable for public debate. We have, for example, "The Honest to God Debate", sparked off by an Anglican Bishop's book (J.A.T. Robinson) in 1963 and Harvey Cox's "Secular City". Such writers took the social context seriously to their great credit. Gill, however argues that they failed to examine the assumptions as to the extent of secularisation. Sometimes philosophic ventures and stances of the intellectuals determined the context within which they wrote and they made little or no use of the resources to hand in sociology, just as a politician might do for the society which he represents. Gill quotes David Martin, that the sociologist can be useful to those who need to know what the social situation is, was or will be. Such analysis may also bring out what could be. Yet the sociologist as such is not competent to state what ought to be, something which is for the politician or theologian to put forward. "If theologians are to be concerned with the social context of theology - with the way people think within the particular societies in which they are operating - then they must expect to fail in their task if they ignore the critical perspective offered by sociologists."

The study of social determinants, Gill insists, does not call into question the validity of theological positions thus obtained. Earlier sociologists by their



positivist approach had made theologians suspicious and apprehensive of them. Theologians such as E.L. Mascall, J.L. Newbigin and A.M. Ramsey, proceeded without reference to sociology in dealing with sociological subjects, e.g., the secularisation of society. Gill is also critical of those sociologists who proceed without reference to theology. Both disciplines must interact in dialogue. He ends the book, "It is only by a long and painful path that the theologian can provide an adequate socio-theological correlation. The theologian, even as a theologian, is obliged to make certain assumptions about the society in which he is placed. If he fails to do so, he may fail to communicate to that society. But if he attempts to do so, he is faced with numerous difficulties. It has been the aim of this book to explore some of these difficulties."

We pause at this point to reflect on the development of sociology into a valid academic discipline from 1907, when the first inaugural lecture was given by a professor of sociology, to 1962 when only the third chair of sociology was set up at the University of Leicester. There has also been a remarkably deep and widespread interest among sociologists in matters of religion. From 1953-1973 Michael Hill can name over fifty books published in this field. Much of this writing has dealt with the more obvious social aspects - the readily quantifiable factors by which religion is found in institutions and can readily be observed by those who profess it. Dr Gill, in something of an aside, deals with "religious sociology", used by the churches as a tool for their administrative and missionary assessment of situations.

Finally, we turn to the third book, "Theology and Social Structures". Here Dr Gill deals less with the wider issues of sociology of religion than with theology. He defines theology as "the written and critical explication of the 'sequelae' of individual religious beliefs and of the correlations and interactions between religious beliefs in general." Theology is demonstrably a human product and as such properly subject to the sociology of knowledge in the same way as science or other academic approach. Gill argues that "any

systematic analysis of the social structure of theology must be based upon an interactionist perspective", bringing out the social determinants of theology and theology's independent social significance. Thus, once constructed, theology may be seen to determine society through the writings of theologians, preaching, listening and those outside aware of its insights. Among the subjects dealt with are theology in relation to war or to abortion where, it is suggested, theology affects them as much as sociology. As for the theological insights in relation to God's call to work as in Calvinist writing, Weber claimed they had a powerful influence on the development of the spirit of capitalism. Thus he expected to find theology exercising a strong influence upon society. Again, Gill argues that the pacifist stand of C.E. Raven, based on his theology, gave social respectability to conscientious objection in World War I.

An editorial review of "Theology and Social Structure" (ET, 1978), after some criticisms, had this to say: "This is a valuable pioneering work in a field renowned for its difficulty and it deserves to be subjected to a careful analysis and critical appraisal. Theologians should read it, for great damage was done to the Church by theologians and church leaders who imagined that they had to allow sociological factors a large place in their decision-making and were too readily influenced by current and transient fashions." So the scene is set for interaction between Theology and Sociology and can only be for the benefit of both.

Professor J.R. Boyd has been Professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological College, Belfast since 1963. He is also an External Lecturer of the Queen's University of Belfast.



Divine Healing and Scripture /1

E.A. Russell

First, a word about the choice of subject, "Divine Healing." It is not meant to imply that what happens in the province of professional medicine does not come from God, but has to do with that aspect of healing which takes place, for example, when such medicine claims to have done all it can to help. It is interesting that in the medical schools there are those who are convinced that "Divine Healing" of this kind does take place.

Another description that might have been chosen is "Faith-Healing." It does, however, tend to lay the emphasis on the manward side, implying that man has a great deal to do with it, and that such a man, e.g., the Faith-Healer, is of such faith as to bring about the divine action, and, in some sense, to exercise control over God. This is not to deny the crucial place that is often given to faith especially in the Gospels and in the present practice of divine healing within the churches. The description "Faith-Healing", whatever safeguards may be imposed or acknowledged, does tend to diminish the emphasis on the divine action and to magnify the part played by the one who becomes the channel of healing.

And what about the description "Spiritual Healing"? It implies an understanding of man in terms of "spirit" and "body". Such a dichotomy tends to play down the body and magnify the spirit. It belongs to the old concept of the body as a tomb where the spirit is imprisoned and longing to be set free and has a basis in what Paul says in Romans 7, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Thus the concern is with the realm of a man's spirit at the expense of the body and the "spiritual healing" proceeds through repentance and forgiveness to the possession of the Holy Spirit. When, however, we attempt to get hold of the biblical concept of man, we find that the Hebrew views man as a total entity. Nor are we to interpret "image", the "image" in which God made man as if it were related merely to the spiritual aspect for such a description includes

the whole man. /3 It is further argued in this connection that Paul sees the whole man as sarx (flesh) and consequently as sinner. /4 If then the distinction of "body" and "spirit" is for the Hebrew a doubtful if not impossible concept, then the description "spiritual" becomes one-sided. Rather "the body is the soul (spirit) on its outward aspect." This will mean that we cannot speak of merely bodily healing but see this as God's action within or upon the total person, nor can we speak of "spiritual healing" without taking into account the body which is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Whether it is the divine action upon the body in restoration to health or upon the spirit of a man bringing about inward renewal and transformation, they are both to be seen as "divine healing".

But the description "Divine Healing" implies something else, which might not be so imperative for the descriptions "faith-healing" or "spiritual healing". If God acts in an immediate manner, bringing something to pass which goes against natural or normal expectation, then it does suggest that the universe is not a closed, mechanical "Newtonian" system where nothing can happen that does not fit in with the so-called laws of the universe. It brings hope to the man who feels himself imprisoned in a system which moves forward inexorably and unchangeably, which has determined what will happen to him and from which there can be no escape; a system where it is no use to pray, or to struggle for freedom, a relentless combination of forces impersonal and unthinking and tyrannical. If God acts in healing in a way that cannot be explained in scientific medical terms, it suggests that the universe is "open", a system which responds to the movement of the transcendent within the regularity of such so-called laws. /5

But we might further ask what is to prevent such a God from acting capriciously and wilfully without any pattern or norm by which we can judge his action? The primitive savage looked out on an enigmatic and frightening world where he could never be certain how the god would act and he had resort to all kinds of means to find out how to gain the god's goodwill. The shaman would try to get the right ritual or the right form of words by which to control the god. In the OT we have examples of God changing his mind



and suggesting a certain inconsistency in His approach and yet perhaps only reflecting the interaction of the divine and the human, where the change of heart in the Israelite found a merciful response on the part of God. And it is when we begin to talk about mercy and steadfast love and justice that we come near to the heart of the matter. Biblical consensus suggests we look for consistency in the divine exercise of power, and reject any impersonal system of causation. /6

It is, however, possible to conceive of two systems, working alongside each other but quite independent, i.e., the causal and the theistic. If Jesus, for example, multiplies five loaves and two fishes, Christian interpreters will see a suspension of the laws of nature, and explain it in terms of God's intervention. Thus we still have two spheres, the material and trans-material, but they have not been brought together in one unifying system. /7 Older Protestant theologians tended to set the action of God over against or contrary to the power of nature. No doubt they would deny that there was any tension but when they put forward the criterion of miracles - that they are acts of God which transcend the powers of nature - it is difficult to resist the impression that there is a certain juxtaposition of God over against his own laws. /8

It is interesting to look for a possible indication as to the lines on which a solution may be found in a Greek writer of Classical times, Herodotus. In a suggestive essay, "Herodotus and the Miraculous" Dr J.H. McDonald makes use of Herodotus' account of the Persian wars, claiming that it represents most faithfully the common Greek conception of the interaction of the human and the divine. Herodotus sought to describe signs and wonders in terms that expressed the popular thought but gave the reader the opportunity to make up his own mind. /9 He made use of Greek mythology but Greek mythology, according to Dr McDonald, "has almost an inspired gift of symbolizing experience.....it helps to clarify conceptions in human terms." /10 But human history is not to be interpreted merely in human terms, since the gods however mythical, were nevertheless manifestations of divine power. Where Herodotus sees

divine intervention, he does not use anthropomorphic terms to describe it. /11 He claims a certain balance in society that has emerged in the laws and conventions of society. Any sin against society upsets this balance and for that, man must pay the penalty. Such sin is an example of hubris, the arrogant pride that brings Nemesis with it. Xerxes, the Great King, broke this balance when he fettered the sea, affronting nature and had to pay the price. The gods sent a storm against the Persian fleet and it suffered heavy losses; they acted when the Persians tried to consult the oracle at Delphi with a thunderstorm and a fall of rocks; when they were defeated at the battle of Plataea, it was in fulfilment of a divine oracle. Herodotus however is not systematic. He merely gives us an impression of the workings of his mind. /12 But he does seem to be saying that there is a balance in nature which we disturb at our peril. Thus the divine and the human are combined in the processes of nature. It is this harmony that gives a certain consistency to all that takes place between the gods and men. /13

What we look for in a God who acts in power is not something arbitrary or unpredictable or without any norm by which to assess his action or possible action. The Hebrew would talk about the "righteousness" or the "faithfulness" of God, someone who made promises and kept them, someone who expresses himself in steadfast love; in other words, a God whose character guarantees the absolute consistency or coherence of all that He does. Assumptions of this kind appear to lie behind Augustine's idea of the will of God. If there are "laws of nature" they are only an expression of this will. But in relation to the concept of miracle he could maintain that the God who instituted them could change them if he willed. Augustine did not appear to face up to the problem that if this is the case then the laws are not the expression of the will of God at all times, so that such a will could presumably become a variable quantity. In some measure he does approach the problem when he writes in De Civitate Dei (Concerning the City of God): Miracle therefore does not happen against nature but against nature as we know it" /14...."for can what happens in the will of God be opposed to nature since in any case the will of such a great Creator is the nature of everything created?" /15



Augustine implying that "nature as we know it" is not nature as it really is? This is hardly likely. So the apparent contradiction of nature as the will of God and not the will of God remains. But if this will is bound up with an all-powerful and beneficent and loving God, whose nature determines his action, then such a concept would bind together natural law and intervention within such a scheme. It is this which becomes the guarantee of regularity or consistency, a conviction which doubtless Augustine would accept - that God is in control and nothing happens apart from him. He overrules the most evil of circumstances, the most demonic of all operations within a fallen world for his glory. He "makes the wrath of man to praise him". We can reject as Barth does any distinction such as "ordinary power" (potentia ordinaria) and "extraordinary power" (potentia extraordinaria) and declare that "a miracle is not proof of a special, but merely the proof of the one Divine omnipotence". /16 Thus we can argue for God's faithfulness in everything. This is the fixed rule according to which all things happens and the law behind it is God himself.

It is something of the same kind that Professor C.F.D. Moule puts forward when he claims that there is only one point of view that the consistent theist can hold. It is the view that we cannot divide up into two systems, material (or causal) and trans-material. "To do so", he writes, "would be to entertain deism (cf. rationalism) rather than theism, and would imply an intolerably mechanical and inorganic relationship between Creator and creature." /17 The only ultimate reality is bound up with the character of a personal God. The material universe itself expresses that character, a character which determines for us what is possible or probable.

Up until this point we have looked at the problem of description whether "Faith-Healing" or "Spiritual Healing" or "Divine Healing" and saw reasons for preferring the third possibility. We have looked at the problem of miracle and the so-called "natural laws" and tried to get some consistent way of describing what happens whether as "natural" or "supra-national" and concluded that the basic premiss of regularity or consistency lies in the character of a personal God. We turn now to look

specifically at "Divine Healing", the aspect of miracle with which we are primarily concerned. On reflection we may conclude that for most people the practice of divine healing is something that lies outside their experience. They enjoy good health. They seldom see the doctor and they are not called into the trauma of knowing that they have a serious terminal disease, or a condition of hyper-anxiety and tension. It is likely that such people are in the majority within the churches though probably in some areas at least a decreasing majority. Medical science has made such progress and so many diseases that in the past would have been extremely serious have lost their binding hold on the health of the ordinary individual that he is less and less likely to think beyond the resources of medical practice whether at home or in hospital. We are told for example that the average citizen in the Western world can expect to live twenty years longer than he might have done in 1900 or that major killers like gastritis, tuberculosis, influenza or pneumonia in the past have been replaced by heart disease, cancer, vascular lesions of the central nervous system, and accidents. /18 It is not to be wondered at, then, if the attitude of many people to divine healing - if an attitude exists at all - is one of complete indifference perhaps related to a sense of its irrelevance to their situation, or even taking the form of disbelief and hostility.

Disbelief in divine healing does not necessarily derive from a disbelief in the inspiration and authority of Scripture. It is interesting that while the Roman Church has always cherished the belief that miracles of healing can take place, the Reformers - and we may ask how far this point of view reflects a situation of polemic - /19 developed a dispensational teaching, claiming that the mighty works Jesus and the apostles did, were only for a particular period and purpose. Luther, for example, appears to have held on to the view that the day of miracles is past, that the complete revelation has been given in the writings of the apostles and no special revelation or miracle is necessary. In his discussion on John 16.13 "And he will declare to you the things that are to come", his view that miracles are



confirmatory of the message comes out on a number of occasions, based presumably on Mark 16.20, "The Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it." /20 In the same paragraph, speaking of salvation, Luther comments, "For this one does not need any new signs or miracles." Later, on the chief doctrine of Christ, he instructs his readers to ignore signs in opposition to it "even if it snows miracles every day." /21 Thus for most of his life Luther denied along with miracles in general the gift of healing. Yet, as in the case of many who are wholly committed to the ministry of divine healing today, his experience showed him that he was mistaken. His friend Melancthon was at the point of death and Luther visibly saw him brought to full life and vigour again. Five years later, in 1545 (Luther died in 1546), he was asked advice about what should be done for a man who was mentally ill. He replied by writing out instructions for a healing service based on the words in the epistle of James, "Is any among you ill? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up." (5.14,15). It does not appear to have been an innovation for Luther for he writes in the same connection "This is what we do, and that we have been accustomed to do, for a cabinetmaker here was similarly afflicted with madness and we cured him by prayer in Christ's name." /22 This inconsistency in Luther can be paralleled in other areas, e.g., in his attitude to the Jews. /23

In a dismissal of extreme unction, based on the same passage in the epistle of James as above, Calvin describes the action of the Roman Church on a par with the laying on of hands as "mere hypocritical stage-play". Then he proceeds, in such a polemic context, to say: "But the gift of healing disappeared with the other miraculous powers which the Lord was pleased to give for a time, that it might render the new preaching of the gospel for ever wonderful...They (i.e. the Roman priests) make themselves ridiculous, therefore, by pretending that they are endued with the gift of healing.....because that gift was temporary, and, owing, in some measure, to the ingratitude

of men, immediately ceased." /24. It is difficult to understand this type of reasoning in someone like Calvin and we are forced to say that if it had not been for the situation of polemic against abuses carried on in the existing church, this so-called "dispensational" teaching would never have arisen. It was a reaction to a church whose members seemed to be continually resorting to pilgrimages to certain churches and shrines where it was believed miracles could take place, to such an extent that one writer describes the urge to pilgrimage as a currendi libido, and speaks of the craze for miracles and signs. /25 The attitude of these key figures in the Reformation movement was bound to be immensely powerful in all who were identified with it, especially since, unlike Luther, Calvin does not seem to have deviated from this position. It is notable, for example, how little interest is taken not only by the twentieth century theologian, Karl Barth, in the ministry of healing but also in recent works on the theology of the New Testament by Dr Donald Guthrie or Dr G.E. Ladd, both conservative scholars. /26 We no longer require signs and wonders, it is seriously claimed, and if we did have them, it would suggest that our faith would be on a lower level and our Christian experience inferior. /27 In the light of the modern renewal movement with its signal demonstrations of faith, this explanation can no longer be entertained and in any case does appear to be based on a misunderstanding of John, 4, 48, "Except you see signs and wonders you will not believe." /28.

But the objections to divine healing do not rest with affirmations that modern medicine is enough or that such healing belonged merely to the period of the early church. The existentialist NT scholar, Rudolph Bultmann, in an article on "The Question of Wonder" /29 shows how persistent is the notion of the validity of natural law, of nature's conformity to law. Miracle is a violation of this conformity and "has therefore become untenable and must be abandoned." /30 It is argued that the idea of miracle is not a notion of faith but purely intellectual. Since miracles can help or harm, some criterion must be established in order to distinguish what is good or bad, in other words, "one must know God



beforehand, before the miracle happens, in order to be certain." It is evident then that miracle does not necessarily include God's action and "hence the Christian faith is apparently not concerned with miracles; rather it has cause to exclude the idea of miracle." /31 To Bultmann any concern to prove the possibility or actuality of the wonders of Jesus as events in the past is wrong. Christ becomes present for us as the preached Christ and the wonders of Jesus are only relevant as part of that preaching and as witnesses to it. They are not to be understood as demonstrable events which form a basis of faith but rather carry the same ambiguity as the wonder of Christ himself. We are not to hanker after Jesus as a historical figure or personality of the past. Rather we are "to see him as the wonder of God...the One who is here for us now as the Word of forgiveness spoken by God." /32

We can see certain links between Bultmann and Luther. Both agree that miracles have a subordinate place, Luther on the basis of a dispensational view which he later abandons or, at least, modifies, and Bultmann on the basis of natural law. Both agree in their emphasis on preaching and on the real wonder as that of the preached Christ and the transformation that is wrought. Both agree on their emphasis on the individual response to the preaching which Luther would interpret in traditional biblical terms but Bultmann uses for his hermeneutic the categories of existentialism. Luther experienced the action of God in divine healing as the response to prayer, but we have no evidence that the writer knows of that Bultmann modified this position. /33

We turn now to look more specifically at divine healing in Scripture. The writers of the NT can only express themselves in relation to healing in terms of the understanding of their times. As they confess their faith in Jesus Christ and are part of the company of believers, no doubt the expression of this understanding will take a distinctive form especially in relation to their view of Jesus. Nevertheless their understanding, e.g., of the causes of illness whether demonic activity or a divine judgment can be and is something they share with their contemporaries. How far this is a legitimate under-

standing in the light of our modern situation is a question that has already been mooted in this essay but it is still a matter of course for continuing debate within the church.

### Old Testament

For the first disciples, set within Judaism, any understanding of "miracle" or "divine healing" is bound up naturally with the OT. Here God had the power of life and death. The essential conviction of most of the writers is expressed in words put in the mouth of Yahweh, "I kill and make alive; I wound and heal; and there is none can deliver out of my hand." (Deut 32.39) Whether it was blindness or deafness, good fortune or bad, the ultimate responsibility lay with God (Ex 4.11). Sometimes the action of Yahweh could not be given any moral explanation, e.g., the laming of Jacob (Gen 32.32) or the attempt to kill Moses (ex 4.24-26) or again the striking dead of Uzzah because he touched the Ark (2 Sam 6.7-10). It was enough for the Israelite that God was the one who acts and his actions were often shrouded in the mystery that belonged to his wholly-other and ineffable being. Since most of the OT writers had no belief in the after-life, reward and punishment were bound up with their present existence. For the more thoughtful the stark inequalities of these would provoke searching questions especially in the matter of redress of wrongs. Answers would be found in their conception of the link up with succeeding generations and the readjustment sometime in the future of the family or race; or alternatively such a dilemma would have to be resolved in a belief in the after-life (cf Psalm 73)

As the Covenant people, Israel was committed to obedience, e.g., "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among the peoples (Ex 19.5), and closely bound up with such commitment and determined by it were sickness and healing.

/34 We have a sombre picture of the results of disobedience in Leviticus:

"If you spurn my statutes and if your soul  
abhors my ordinances, so that you will not



do all my commandments, but break my covenant, I will do this to you: I will appoint over you sudden terror, consumption and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away," (26.16)

and an even more devastating catalogue of punishments in a parallel passage in Deuteronomy:

"The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt, and with the ulcers and the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed. The Lord will smite you with madness and blindness and confusion of mind; and you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways." (28.27-29)

No doubt these frightening threats were related to the concern - and a very rigorous concern - on the matter of obedience, made all the more stringent as the concluding sentences of the book of laws, the Law of Holiness (Leviticus) and of Deuteronomy with its sentences of "blessing" and "cursing" show. We have implicit here a conviction about God's sovereign power over life and death. The severity of the language may be understood against the conventions of the time and perhaps the danger of apostasy from the God of their fathers to idolatry. Medical science can explain consumption and fever, ulcers, boils, scurvy and itch, in terms of certain viruses or germs which would be generally accepted. For the Israelite, to whom illness was a judgment of God, and which he could not understand, the easy way out was to pin it on God. In a more sophisticated way, the Christian doctor relates the whole miracle of scientific healing ultimately to God's ordering of his world as something which can respond to intellect and reason. In all these expressions in the OT, there is a deep conviction that sickness and disease constituted a punishment from God for breaking the terms, whether ritual or moral, of the covenant. Further, no prospective priest with any kind of deformity or ailment could serve in the temple (Lev 21.18-23) for his sickness showed that he had been defiled by sin, and therefore broken off relationship with God.

/35 The belief that long life was bound up with the practice of law and goodness is evidenced in the words of the Psalmist:

"What man is there who desires life,  
and covets many days, that he may enjoy  
good? Keep your tongue from evil and  
your lips from speaking deceit. Depart  
from evil and do good." (34.12-14)

Sickness, too, seems to be implied in the words, "My son, do not scorn correction from Yahweh, do not resent his rebuke; for Yahweh reproves the man he loves, as a father checks a well-loved son." (Prov 3.11-12) Thus sickness could be a way by which God brought a man back to his senses and to the way of obedience. Judaism only underlined the firmness of its conviction or dogma on the close relationship of sin and sickness when, in a situation of uncertainties, it tried to spell out the way sickness expressed itself in terms of various maladies, e.g.. ulcers and dropsy were due to immorality or licentiousness, leprosy to blasphemy, bloodshed and perjury. The transmission of guilt within the family or group unit led to the most cruel of interpretations, e.g., that children born crippled or epileptic were being punished because their parents were unfaithful. It was a situation in which knowledge was uncertain but answers superimposed in the interest of dogma, e.g., the gratuitous suggestion that the sin of a child in the womb could cause its mother's illness. /36

We can see, then, that in the earlier phases of OT thought at least, disease was understood as the result of disobedience or sin brought about by God. Such an understanding persisted into the NT period and appears to be implied in the narrative of the healing of the paralysed man (Mark 2.1-10) or of the man blind from birth (John 9.2). In the case of Job, it was explained in terms of the Adversary who acted with the divine permission (Job 2.7). Such an Adversary appears to be a buffer to the divine transcendence but, to some extent, does relieve Yahweh of responsibility for the direct action though ultimately it only happens because Yahweh permits it. If, however, the Hebrew tended to explain



any form of sickness as the result of the divine action, the opposite is also true. Yahweh was regarded as the Healer of his people and where people were healed, it was taken as an indication of the divine forgiveness. Indeed a close relation existed between the fulfilment of the divine commands throughout life and a healthy and prolonged existence. The blessings of material prosperity as well as good health were bound up with this. The promises from the Lord, described as "Healer", are expressed for us in Exodus: "If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in his eyes....I will put none of the diseases that I put upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord, your Healer." (15.26). As a result of looking only to God for healing, it is not unnatural that it should be regarded as an affront to Yahweh to resort to a human physician and indeed such a consultation was forbidden (Asa in II Chronicles 16.12 was an exception). Occasionally the prophets would prognosticate, e.g., Nathan can tell David that he will not die but his child will (II Samuel 12.14); Elijah can say that it was Yahweh who brought about the death of the widow of Zarephath's son (I K.17.20); Elisha's command was the channel of God's healing action for Naaman in a narrative where the primitive idea of Yahweh as God of the Israelite land is set over against that of Rimmon, as the god of Syria. Jordan in the land of Judah is where Naaman bathes. He takes away some of the earth that represents Yahweh's possession to set up a shrine to him in the temple of Rimmon (2 Kings 5.14-18). The only prescription in the OT apparently was a poultice of figs to heal a boil, given by Isaiah and effective in healing king Hezekiah (2 Kings 20.7). Since sickness was regarded as due to God's action, it had to do with the individual's relationship with God, who alone could heal. This is probably why, generally, there is no outline of medical treatment in the OT, except for a few folk remedies.

### New Testament

Those who are engaged in the ministry of divine healing today in a convinced and active way, have certain attitudes that should be mentioned perhaps here. They can be people who have experienced what they believe to be the action of

God in an exceptional situation when, e.g., a nervous condition of distressing consequences is deemed irreparable by doctors receives healing by prayer or prayer and the laying on of hands or by proxy; or a cancer which has an alarming prognosis by the specialists disappears and never returns. These people are so certain that God has acted that they repudiate any scepticism as to what has taken place and any attempt to undermine the records of divine healing in the NT. Often especially in the renewal of the Holy Spirit movement, they will have a lively conviction about the activity of demons and even if not in an extravagant or unwise practice of exorcism, they nevertheless believe that through prayer individually or in groups, such a sufferer is "delivered" or restored to peace of mind and even to faith. It is clear, of course, that if there are those who experience healing, there are also those who know themselves in an extraordinary way as the channel of healing. Thus healer and healed often help to make up the considerable and growing number of those who engage in prayer groups and healing services and there can be little doubt that God is speaking to the Church through what is happening and the Church should be ready to listen.

That these things are happening helps to give confidence in the biblical records especially in the gospels and we have books on divine healing that do not attempt to argue the case for divine healing but accept it as a proven fact. We have only got to think of the World Council Studies No.3 on "The Healing Church", published in 1965 or, more recently, the Bishop of Selby's book on "The Christian Healing Ministry" published in 1981 and reviewed in Irish Biblical Studies of April 1982. Thus our approach to the NT evidence is a positive and descriptive one at this stage, though some of the critical aspects have already been looked at above.

Those engaged in divine healing services have certain presuppositions. They believe that it is the will of God to heal. They are aware of many cases where such healing does not take place but this does not prevent them believing that since Jesus healed, it is the will



of God to heal. It is evident that on no occasion do we find Jesus saying in relation to a patient, "Heal if it is your will.". Thus the approach of such is, it is claimed, all the more effective because there is no room for any hesitation on the matter of healing, and this lack of hesitancy is itself, not a claim on God, but evidence that God is already active in creating the conditions for healing. Of course there are many in the Church who see a danger in this. It can raise expectations that may only be disappointed. It can encourage unhappy comparisons and a sense of rejection and even create an attitude of hostility. Starting with the situation that not all are healed, such members claim that it is clearly not God's will always to heal. The suffering can be something that ministers to the deepening and maturing of the personality, as it appears to have done in the case of Paul whose "thorn in the flesh" does not appear to have been taken away. With these preliminary observations, we turn now to look specifically at the NT evidence.

### The Gospels

In the NT, it is the Gospels that provide us with more information than any other writings except the book of Acts. In the Epistles there are few references though enough to give us some idea of the thought and practice of the early church. /38

In the Gospels, the Jesus presented to us is one who regularly heals and exorcizes demons. Such activity is not divorced from his preaching and teaching ministry. It is curious, for example, that when Jesus performs his first exorcism in the synagogue in Mark (1.23-26), the people relate the exorcism to the teaching with authority (27). The omission of the section by Matthew would appear to indicate he found the connection awkward and especially as he omits so little of Mark. With the emphasis, too, that he makes on instruction, the omission becomes all the more significant. Further confirmation of the awkwardness of the passage is indicated in Luke (4.33-37) who re-shapes it to read, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."(36)

The link of preaching, teaching and healing is confirmed for us by the summaries of Jesus' ministry found here and there in Mark and repeated in the other Synoptic Gospels (not found in John). An extended and elaborated form is found in Matthew where Jesus is described as teaching and preaching the kingdom of God and healing every disease and infirmity among the people, viz, "those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, /39 and paralytics." (Matt 4.23; cf Mark 1.34; 3.10). The disciples, twelve in number as representing the total church and perhaps the New Israel, are allowed to share in this ministry as those commissioned by Jesus. He bestows on them the same authority (exousia) as his own to expel unclean spirits. They share in healing the sick, anointing them with oil (Mark 6.7,13). Oil is not mentioned in connection with Jesus' acts of healing. Does Mark imply that Jesus does not need to use such methods for if later he uses spittle (8.23), it is his own? Even in the account of healing the blind man in John's Gospel, the clay is made by Jesus' own spittle (9.6). The only other place where anointing with oil is mentioned in connection with healing is in James 5.14ff. For some reason which is not clear, both Matthew and Luke omit the mention of anointing with oil. In any case the mission of Jesus links up with that of the disciples as preaching, teaching and healing.

Such healing, however, must be understood within the context of the whole ministry of Jesus. Matthew in a summary peculiar to him (though it may represent a condensing of Mark 1.14b-15), /40 presents Jesus' message as "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (4.17). The essential meaning of "repent" (μετάνοιέω) has to be understood in the light of the Hebrew word it translates i.e., נָחַם. Johannes Behm, in his article on μετάνοιέω and μετάνοια, claims that they "are the forms in which the NT gives new expression to the ancient concept of religious and moral conversion." /41 Such "conversion" or "change" is to take place in view of the nearness of the kingdom or indeed of its presence. Such a "kingdom" or "reign" is present in Jesus' ministry where "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are



cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them." (Matt 11.4-5). /42 That preaching has priority with Jesus is especially clear in Mark, e.g., after considerable healing activity, Jesus is told that the crowd is looking for him. His reply has a peculiar significance for Mark i.e., that he has to preach elsewhere and this was why he "came out" (ἐξῆλθον) - is there a suggestion of pre-existence here, making the purpose all the more striking? /43 That preaching is prior is also suggested by the narrative of the healing of the paralysed man where Jesus first pronounces forgiveness before healing the man (2.1-10) and if we are to link this up with the account of healing of a similar case at the pool of Bethesda, there the man is told, "Sin no more" (5.14). Jesus is concerned with the whole person, within whom there is an area from which come all manner of evil thoughts, suggesting the Rabbinic explanation of the source of sin as the "the evil impulse" (עַלְוֶה רָעָה; Mark 7.21-23). In this connection, it is interesting to note that the term used for "save" (σώζω) also mean to "make whole" or "heal". It is never used for the healing of one part of a man but for the whole man and it leaves open the interpretation that such healing goes beyond the mere physical fact. This is confirmed probably by the fact that the verb is used for the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and for the woman who was a sinner (Luke 8.50; 7.50). /44 It would appear that Jesus' priority is to proclaim salvation, the setting free of the man from all that impairs life (Luke 19.9,10). Such "setting free" is bound up with the Cross in the overall purpose of God in Jesus who "came to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10.45; cf. also 14.24) While healing in itself can dramatize the meaning of Jesus' mission, it does seem, in the ministry of Jesus, to occupy a subordinate position in relation to the proclamation of the kingdom, the sovereign reign of God, but is not to be divorced from it.

It is interesting that it is only in the Matthaean tradition, we have Jesus quote from Hosea, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (9.13; 12.7); we have the parable of forgiveness to seventy times seven (18.12) and the

beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" (5.7). The first of the quotations from Hosea has the setting of Jesus with taxgatherers and sinners at a meal. It is linked up with the saying about only the sick needing a doctor. Further, the practical expression of mercy is visiting the sick (25.36,43). Thus, if we are to understand Jesus' ministry, we have to see it in terms of the exercise of "mercy" (ἔλεος). ἔλεος, however, hardly brings out the fulness of the Hebrew word behind it, רַחֵם (hesed) which embraces within itself God's gracious and loving action. The continuing support for such a meaning is evident in the RSV rendering of "stedfast love" and the Jerusalem Bible "love". Jesus' ministry is further defined in Matthew by a characteristic use of an OT quotation from Deutero-Isaiah, "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases" (8.17) and this in a context of healing and exorcism. Indeed Jesus' ministry of healing can be seen as a fulfilment of the second greatest command - to love one's neighbour as oneself. There is an interesting and perhaps significant reserve in the use of the verb "have compassion" (σπλαγχνίζομαι) in the synoptic gospels. It is spoken only of Jesus whether in response to the leper (Mark 1.41) or to the crowds (Mark 6.34; 8.2), /45 or used by him in his parables whether of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10.33) or the father who welcomes the prodigal son (Lk 15.20) or the master who shows mercy to his servant heavily in debt (Mt 18.27). It would appear that this love or compassion was something that the early church discerned as supremely characteristic of Jesus in relation to the needy and the diseased. If healing is in obedience to the will of God as expressed in the command to love one's neighbour, to have stedfast love inclusive of pity and compassion, then the Church is compelled to seek healing for others as Jesus did. We are to seek through the same Holy Spirit who came upon Jesus the fulness of the divine compassion especially in ministering to those who are ill, who are in fact our "neighbour", or in whom we find Jesus (Mt 25.40).

In any consideration of divine healing, the place of faith has to be examined. It is evident that in the

case of Jesus, his relationship with God played a significant part and is implied in all the gospel accounts. We can call it "faith" if we will /46 and suppose a faith relationship of Jesus with God, implicit in the cry, "Abba, Father." The person who becomes the channel of healing can often be a person of deep and rich experience of God in Christ, and his close relationship with God can be important. Yet we have also to remember that there are those without any visible faith or awareness of God who can also be instruments of healing. It is something that is inherent in their make-up and something that is effective in making people well. /47 There is also the faith of the sick person, who responds in confidence to the healer. Jesus believed that sicknesses were not to be fully overcome until the reign of God was consummated, but, as the powers of the kingdom were present in him in the here and now, healing took place, e.g., he can say, "If I by the Spirit of God, expel demons then the kingdom of God is upon you." (Mt 12.28) Yet exorcisms or healings are shown to have a close relationship with faith on a number of occasions. In the case of the paralytic, the faith that is mentioned can include that of the paralytic for himself in addition to that of the four who bore him. In the case of the epileptic boy there is no suggestion of faith on the boy's part but merely that of the father on his behalf. (Mk 2.1-12; 9. 14-29). Jesus can tell the father of the epileptic boy, "All things are possible to him who believes," (Mk 9.23) - a statement that is omitted in the parallel accounts in Matthew (17.14-21) and Luke (9.37-43a). Indeed the faith of the father is not recorded in the parallel accounts but the emphasis is on the lack of faith of the disciples and this is common to the Q account. Matthew places the whole emphasis of the account on the reply of Jesus when the disciples come to ask him, "Why could we not cast him out?" Jesus' explanation is, "It was because of your lack of faith." (17.20) On the other hand in Mark where the same question is put, the answer is different, "This type (of demon) does not come out except by prayer." (Mk 9.29) It is possible to maintain, however, that Mark has both emphases, lack of faith of the disciples being suggested in the address of Jesus, "O faithless generation" (Mk 9.19) and the Matthaean account represents an abbreviation of



Mark, slanted toward an emphasis on faith. In the Lucan account, there is, strangely no mention of prayer nor is there the same stress on faith that we have in Matthew. It would appear that the story developed on different lines, or, more probably, we have two independent condensations of Mark.

It is possible that in all Marcan accounts of healing faith is explicit or implicit (1.30,40;2.5;3.10;5.34; 7.25,29,32;8.22). In Luke's own source we have accounts of healing where faith is not mentioned and in narratives that are not unlike those in Mark, i.e., the case of the woman with an infirmity (13.11) and of the dropsied man (14.2), though Luke, as he so often does in the book of Acts, may assume that faith even if not mentioned is present. What kind of faith are we to understand in these accounts? Is it a condition required of one

who wished to be healed by Jesus' supernatural power or the power he exercised in the fulness of the Holy Spirit? Fridrichsen maintains that faith is to be taken in its completely natural sense, as the tribute due to a great prophet, a homage that is graciously rewarded, an expression of confidence that Jesus does not refuse.

/48 Is it then simply trust in Jesus' miraculous powers? /49 It is clear that it is not the kind of faith that creates disciples necessarily. It would be surprising if all who were healed became disciples when we consider how few members made up the Church according to Luke's pre-Pentecostal account, i.e., 120. It is not what we understand by the faith which puts a man in the right with God though it could and probably did make many better Jews and more committed to God. The term for miracle in Mark  $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ , implies a demonstration of "power", perhaps Jesus is the channel of the power of God or of God's direct exercise of power in an eschatological context. Healing is often understood as response to the "trust" or "faith" of the sick person. Indeed some would judge faith to be the sole ground of healing. It does appear true of the synoptic tradition that Jesus seldom acts in healing unless it is requested. Indeed it is possible that he did not act in healing at Nazareth because they did not ask for it, i.e., it was not to be considered a qualification of Jesus'

power to heal. /51 In the Fourth Gospel, we are introduced to another term for miracle, σημεῖον, "sign", but "sign" in a very distinctive sense. If we can take it as the Johannine equivalent of δύνάμις, it is only because it, like δύνάμις in Mark becomes the special term for miracle in John. /52 The meaning of "signs" is bound up with the person of Jesus. They help to reveal his person and the response is in terms of faith not in the miracle but in Him who acts within the "sign" and reveals himself (2.11;4.54). It is hardly necessary to state that in divine healing today there can be a discernment of Jesus' power and presence and an experience of his self-revelation which can transform and renew a total personality, so that even if there are considerable problems for many about the historicity of John's Gospel there can scarcely be any misunderstanding of the reality of what he says in relation to Christian experience.

In the Gospels, however, the emphasis is most often on the will and action of Jesus in healing. There may and most often was response but also the lack of it. It is not always clear that "faith" as such is present where some receive healing. Healing itself could be a demand to face up to the challenge of the imminent reign of God in the person of Jesus and whatever healings are done are evidence of that kingdom's presence and indeed of Jesus as the Coming One. It is not untrue to the NT witness to say that "God bestows it freely but not universally within the Church. Healing does not always come to those who pray for it, and it is given upon occasion to those who least expect it." /53 Yet Jesus does command faith, however we explain it (Mt 8.13;9.22) and prayer (Mk 9.29; cf. the Epistle of James where the "prayer of faith" brings healing 5.15) and healing may be merely the first stage on the road to discipleship as the Johannine tradition shows (John 9.6, 35-38).

### The Book of Acts

Here the space devoted to healing is much less than that in the gospels and for those who like statistics - though what their significance is, is not always clear - it is something like five per cent over against some forty per cent in each of the gospels. Peter who is so prominent

in the gospels (though he does seem superseded by the beloved disciple in John, that elusive figure) but never in relation to healing except as part of the healing church on mission (Mk 6.7ff and pars), is now in the foreground of those engaged in healing, a healing which links closely with the early kerygmatic speeches of Peter, themselves only delivered by him as one filled with the Holy Spirit (3.1-10-9.32-35,36-41;5.15-16). It is notable that although James, the Lord's brother, appears to have had a position of leadership in the church at Jerusalem, no healing activity is attributed to him but perhaps an authoritative position deriving from his administrative ability. Nor apart from the provisions for the admission of the Gentiles, representing the decision of the Jerusalem Council, do we find him ever speaking or preaching. Luke's hero, Paul, comes into prominence in the latter half of Acts when Peter falls into the background, and both preaching and healing are spoken of him (14.8-11;19.11-12;20.9-12;28.9; cf 19.11). If "many signs and wonders" are spoken of the apostles (2.43) healings are reserved for Peter, Paul, Hellenists Stephen and Philip, and Barnabas, the companion of Paul (14.3) (It is possible that Ananias who lays hand on Paul that he might receive the Holy Spirit is regarded as performing the miracle of restoration of Paul's sight: 9.17-18). While "signs and wonders" are attributed to all the apostles (2.43;5.12), the phrase does seem to be a stereotype where it is taken for granted that such take place but there is no detailed information available. It is otherwise with Jesus, attested by "signs and wonders" (2.22) but if the apostles are equally attested by signs and wonders (cf. the prayer in 4.30), the details are not forthcoming except in the case of those mentioned above. If John accompanies Peter in the narrative of the healing of the lame man, it is only as a silent partner (3.1,3,11) for Peter alone preaches and heals. It is possible, however, that Peter is representative of John (see 4.13) as he was of the apostles at Pentecost (2.14). On the other hand John may be present to show that the Church carries out Jesus' command to go in twos.

What about the place of faith? Faith is not mentioned explicitly in relation to the healing of the lame man



(Acts 3.1ff) though his whole joyous response in walking, leaping and praising God makes such a deduction irresistible. There is no need to mention faith in the case of Aeneas who is one of the saints (9.32f) or of the devout Dorcas (9.36-41). If a girl is set free from a spirit of divination, it is done in the name of Jesus who himself has triumphed over evil spirits but there is no suggestion of conversion to discipleship (16.16-24). Both believers and non-believers share in the healing activity of the church done in the name of Jesus and attesting the presence of his Holy Spirit. It is possible that Luke understands that all believers take part in healing, e.g., the participation of Philip, Stephen, Ananias and Barnabas (9.17-19; 14.3). News of the healing activity brings the response of faith on a number of occasions in different areas, e.g., in Lydda and Sharon (9.35), Joppa (9.42). The initiative that led to healing varies as in the Gospels. Sometimes it is someone outside the church like the lame man (3.3) or within the church fellow-christians (9.38) or an apostle, whether Peter (9.34) or Paul with Eutychus (20.10ff). Paul could act when he could discern (cf. gifts of Spirit in 1 Cor. 12ff) faith or perform an exorcism when the demoniac made herself a nuisance (16.18) or act in healing for the father of the leading man, Publius of Malta (28.8). Aspects of healing in Luke appear to be absent in the book of Acts, e.g., compassion, fulfilment of Scripture, the cry for healing. Yet too much should not be made of this since (1) Luke assumes his Gospel will also have been read; (2) He is writing an outline of the progress of the church's mission and cannot include more than a brief account of many events (there is of course a certain amount of repetition, e.g., three accounts of Paul's conversion, and in the narrative of the events leading to the admission of the Gentiles but it can be argued that this is a deliberate emphasis on events of major importance); (3) His dominant purpose is to tell of the "Acts of the Holy Spirit". The healing miracles are only important as bound up with, and expressive of, the good news proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit (1.8). Whether it is healing or preaching, the Holy Spirit becomes the alter ego of Jesus, representing him to the world.

## Epistles

In the NT epistles (and here we are primarily concerned with Paul), there are only a few references to sickness and healing. This is perhaps only to be expected since the letters are addressed to specific situations though it may be odd that it is not raised as a major issue. Is the explanation in the fact that healing was assumed as the regular practice of the church associated with worship and linked with the gifts expected from the Holy Spirit, e.g., Paul appears to expect that when people were admitted into the church by baptism on profession of faith that they too would share in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and these included "gifts of healings"? To suggest, as Fridrichsen does, that Paul knew the tradition of Jesus' healing miracles but because he was determined not to know Jesus after the flesh, he preferred to concentrate on the risen Lord, is hardly open to cogent proof. /54 But problems of healing did not appear to arise to afford an opportunity for Paul to show such knowledge which indeed he may assume. It is not improbable that Paul found the practice of divine healing in the early church, perhaps at Damascus in the first instance, and then in other churches. Thus he does not find it necessary to raise the issue as it was part of the regular practice of the church. If the illness of Epaphroditus is mentioned - so serious that he nearly died - Paul does not tell us how he was healed but merely says, "God had mercy on him" (Phil 2.27). The form of expression appears ordinary for such a signal recovery. Was it at some distance from the event or was it not regarded as anything unusual? We have no mention of exorcisms or demon possession or raising from the dead. The healing would not be confined necessarily to the Christian community for unbelievers would be present at the services in the house-churches, e.g., the statement that tongues were a sign for unbelievers (1 Cor 14.22).

"Gifts of healings" is a unique phrase, unknown in the rest of the NT (1 Cor 12.9). Perhaps not unrelated to it is the "gift of faith". These "gifts of healings" lend themselves to various interpretations of which we may mention only two of interest: (1) different gifts for different diseases - in the nature of the case something which cannot be proved. Is such an interpretation

warranted by the experience of some branch of the church? (2) Different members within the body of Christ one of whom has gifts of healing which are effective for one type of person, another for another type (or types). There is some evidence in support of this where one channel of healing, successful for one, fails with another, a pattern repeated over and over again. The "gifts" are gifts within the body of Christ and the totality of these gifts are operative for the widest number of people. Related to this may be another gift of the Spirit, that of "faith" but interpretations of this are also uncertain. Is it a gift of faith for a specific act of healing in the services of worship which may not be present at other times, an ad hoc gift? Is it faith for others outside the worshipping community that they may be healed? It is of course not Paul's typical use of the word "faith", faith that "justifies" but a faith possibly unique in Paul's writings. We know that Jesus talks about the faith that moves mountains, the faith to which all things are possible, and within the history of pietism we have those "giants of faith" through whose prayers and expectant faith remarkable things have happened. It is easy for the more rational approach to be sceptical about the claims that are made but the claims are made and continue to be made. Are we here faced with issues that lie outside our grasp, where we need to accept a reverent agnosticism or an acknowledgement of mysteries beyond our "ken"? This faith, however, mentioned in 1 Cor 12 appears to be a special gift, bestowed probably in the services of worship and related to some situation of which we have no certain knowledge; it still remains a possibility that it is related to acts of divine healing, as it is throughout the Gospels.

### Healed and Unhealed

The problem of those within the church who are not healed emerges also within the NT. Jesus can speak of many lepers in Israel at the time of Naaman, the Syrian, but God only visited Naaman with healing (Lk 4.27), nor do we have any records in Luke of any healing taking place in Jesus' home town, Nazareth, though we do have a few healed in Mark(6.5;cf Lk4.28-30). A major problem



for Paul was his "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor 12.7,8), which was not as far as we know healed. It would appear that Paul views it, rather after the fashion of the OT thought, as given by God, e.g., the passive "was given me" suggests God's action (12.7). Yet it is described as a "messenger of Satan". Is this merely a metaphorical or traditional statement, or does Paul conceive the "messenger of Satan" (cf. the "Satan" of Job) as fulfilling the divine intention? The result was that Paul gave himself repeatedly to prayer - the "three times" is interpreted by commentators from Chrysostom to C.K. Barrett as "repeatedly". It gave him a fresh experience of the grace of God as sufficient for the time of weakness, so that in the end he can say, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses...for when I am weak, then I am strong" (9,10). Thus here we see something of what illness can do for the believer, and how the divine purpose can bring good out of evil

What does scripture say about the relation of sickness to the will of God? Jesus carried on a ministry of healing because he believed that sickness and disease were not God's will if perfectly fulfilled. He prayed and worked for their removal. He looked upon the healings and exorcisms that took place as evidence of the Holy Spirit's activity through him and of the presence of the kingdom of God (Mt 12.27). He saw himself engaged in a struggle with the forces of evil and disease and, on one occasion, when the mission of the seventy included exorcisms, he declared that he saw Satan falling from Heaven (Lk 10.18). Such a struggle suggests that illness was not God's will. /55 Those who heal in the book of Acts also assume that healing is part of the divine purpose (3.1ff; 9.32-43) and Paul's persistent prayer for his illness to be removed could suggest that he believed it was God's will he should be healed. Yet even when such a prayer was not answered, it is evident that illness can become a means of deepening and enriching the spiritual resources of the one afflicted.

The OT background has shown that there are certain assumptions about the relation of sickness and sin. (vide supra). If a man was ill, the Jew would ask what sin he had committed. The child of David and Bethsheba died in spite of David's entreaty (2 Sam 12.14) and it is seen as the divine act of judgment. The interpretation of

sickness and death as the divine judgment goes back to Genesis (3.16-19). While the righteous man is promised freedom from disease (Ex 16.26), the disobedient are promised "sudden terror, consumption and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away" (Lev 26.14-6; vide supra). Later, apart from the conventional ending the book of Job leaves the problem of sickness and suffering unanswered. Yet such sickness together with all the misfortunes that came upon Job brought him to a deeper level of thought and understanding than might have been possible without it. He saw God as present in the midst of sickness and pain.

Later, in NT times, sickness comes generally to be understood as due to evil, even demonic forces, and not divine. In Jesus, the bearer of the Holy Spirit, God exercises his sovereignty in expelling demons. Such expulsion of demons is by way of anticipation of Jesus' triumph in his death and resurrection, when the Kingdom came with power (Mk 9.1ff). In John's Gospel Jesus refutes those who say that the parents of the man who was blind had sinned /57 i.e., he does not subscribe to the general Jewish point of view. Rather, the Jesus of John claims that, in the Providence of God, it was to manifest the divine working (Jn 9.3). It is thus possible to maintain that, in the NT, sickness affords an opportunity for God to manifest his redemptive or liberating power. We may note also that, in what appears to have been mental illness, the cause could be identified as the action of demonic spirits (Mk 1.21-27). /58

This is not to say that there cannot be a link between sin and sickness. This is implied in the healing of the paralytic, where Jesus first pronounces forgiveness (Mk 2.1-12); and of the man ill for thirty-eight years in John (5.14). Paul can say that what a man sows he reaps; and this can apply to sickness that a man brings on himself by evil ways (Rom 1.27). Jesus, by his emphasis on the need to forgive to seventy times seven, i.e., without any limitation, would appear to link it with wholeness of living. Refusal to forgive brings its own spiritual illness with it and can, as experience tells us, affect

the physical personality, so closely is the body linked with the inner spirit. Such refusal to forgive can itself indicate a situation of unforgiveness in relation to God. Jesus, by interiorizing the law, e.g., from murder to anger, and from adultery to wrong desire, by teaching that what comes out of a man defiles him, shows where the real centre of sickness, spiritual sickness, is to be found.  
/59

### Means of Healing

In the NT we find certain means used in connection with healing. With Jesus it could be merely the word of command (Mt 9.6) or a touch (Mt 9.29), or the use of saliva and clay, saliva at the time being regarded as having healing properties (Jn 9.6). It is possible also that he used oil, since his disciples used it for anointing the sick (Mk 6.13). Similarly in the book of Acts, healing can be by word for exorcism (16.18) or healing of a cripple (14.10), or by touch (5.12); or by word and touch (3.1-10). In the case of the apparently dead Eutychus, Paul embraced him (20.9-12). Sometimes healing is related to the shadow of an apostle (5.15), or by cloths from his body (19.12)

In the epistle of James, the subject of healing is dealt with in the context of a discussion on prayer. The sick man is to call the elders of the church, i.e., those who, like the elders in the synagogue, were men of authority, responsible in this case for pastoral oversight and spiritual direction. The sick person does not appear to be able to attend the church where prayers could be offered for his recovery. It does look as if we have an ideal situation here where "the prayer of faith shall heal the sick and the Lord shall raise him up." (5.15) As in Jewish thought, healing and forgiveness go together, "if he has sinned, the Lord will forgive him." James makes no qualification of this confidence, though he must have known of those who were not healed even with the laying on of hands and anointing. Anointing with oil for illness was common in the ancient world. Jewish Rabbis visited the sick and anointed them with oil to cure such ailments as headache. Was the oil (and saliva, clay, shadow,



cloths ?) a supplementary aid from popular folklore to awaken faith? Whatever the explanation, James shows remarkable confidence in the healing of the total person with the main emphasis, in the context, on the corporate prayer of the leaders of the church.

Whatever the variation in means, it is God who does the healing. Jesus, Son of God, in the power and fulness of the Spirit, had a closeness with the Father, a power of discernment and penetration into the varied situation of human need and a compassion that were unique. Even if science today has a great deal to tell us about psycho-therapeutics which help, in part, to a better understanding of Jesus as healer, it can hardly give us the full truth about his unique relationship with God and with people.

The biblical records tell us little about the relationship between medicine and the healing practised by Jesus and the apostles. We have seen in the OT a situation where resort to a human physician was generally forbidden. In the NT we are told that Luke is "the beloved physician" (Col 1.4) and, within his writings, supporting evidence of such a profession was formerly claimed. It is certainly notable that, whereas Mark can say of the woman with the haemorrhage that "she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors, and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse" (5.26), Luke omits such a statement. Did he not care for the depreciation of members of his profession?

The NT gives us little or no information about co-operation, or the lack of it, with medical practitioners and in the circumstances of Palestine of the time this perhaps was hardly to be expected. Yet both divine healing, in the sense in which we have used it, and the healing of medical practitioners come from God, the Creator; i.e., both in their own way warrant the description "divine". We too readily take for granted the immense miracle of modern medicine but should never forget, e.g., that the powers of observation and deduction from the facts presented are all of God. It is notable that in the case of the woman with the haemorrhage, it was only because the physicians could not help her that she

came to Jesus. And there are numerous occasions when many doctors, aware that they cannot secure healing by their skills, happily associate themselves with the practice of divine healing and value the importance of prayer, of pastoral counsel and the laying on of hands, and of the possible total renewal, bodily and spiritual, of the patient. /60

It is time to attempt some conclusion. The complexity of the biblical evidence shows itself in the varied understanding within the church on the biblical basis and practice of divine healing. None, however, will dispute that it is a common conviction of the biblical writers that God is creator, that ultimately he is sovereign in his world and that nothing happens apart from him. It is such that on occasion the OT writers can speak of an evil spirit coming from the Lord. What God made was good and by insisting on this what is not good can be attributed to other causes and in particular to man's sin. A general conviction is that, in the fall of Adam, creation was associated with that fall and sickness in addition (cf Rom 8.22)

God has the power to recreate or restore. Through Jesus Christ his plan is to set people free from all that cripples life, whether sin or sickness. Thus the NT can speak of new birth, of new people, of a new heaven and a new earth, of putting off the old man and putting on the new. In Jesus' person healings and exorcisms took place, which he adduced as evidence that the reign of God was present (cf Mt 12.28). In him God's recreating power for physical sicknesses was present; but such restoration or sickness was not to be divorced from the proclamation of the good news of the kingdom or, in the apostolic church, of Christ crucified.

While Jesus stressed the importance of faith in relation to healing, yet it would appear that bodily healing could take place without total renewal or even without faith being present in the one healed. It was a continuing problem for the church as to why some believers were not healed and, further, why those outside the church, could perform healings or exorcisms which the disciples could not. (Cf Mk 9.28,29,38) While various means were used in connection with healings, including remedies recommended at the time, any healings were due to the divine action and

not to anything man could do. Again, whatever may be the link between sin and sickness - and Jesus again and again stressed the need of forgiveness from God to man and man with man- compassion rather than judgment was the main imperative of divine healing.

We may add that there is no specific requirement as to the location of any healing whether in the synagogue or the congregation at worship or in the open. Jesus did give the promise according to the gospel tradition that where two or three are gathered in his name, there he is in the midst. James called the elders of the church. In the church at Corinth, "gifts of healings" appear to have been exercised at the gatherings for worship (1 Cor 12-14). The church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is called to the ministry of healing; but always with the full recognition of the expertise of medical practitioners and in full co-operation, recognizing that all this remarkable knowledge is part of the divine gift to the church and to the world.

## Notes

1. This paper was first conceived in the course of preparing a report for the Doctrine Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The writer gladly acknowledges his debt to many of the insights of members of the Committee, especially those engaged in the ministry of Divine Healing. The views of the enlarged paper are, however, essentially his own.
2. Cf W.G. Kümmel, Man in the NT (ET), London 1963, p47 "Paul knows...only the complete man who is sarx, soma, psyche etc"; Ninian Smart, The Religious Experience of Mankind, London 1971,p370; E. Jacob, Theology of the OT, NYork 1958,p174 in Robert B. Laurin,(Ed),Contemporary OT Theologians, London 1970,p157
3. Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, (ET), London 1961,p56
4. Kümmel, op.cit., p60f
5. Cf. C.F.D. Moule (ED.), Miracles, London 1965, pp13,89
6. Moule, op.cit.,p15



7. ibid; the argument, however freshly expressed, is of course not new.
8. H. van der Loos, The Miracles of Jesus, Leiden 1965 (a massive book extending to some 748 pages!), p41
9. Moule, op.cit., p83
10. ibid
11. ibid, p86
12. ibid
13. ibid , p90
14. J.P. Migne, Patres Latini, Vols XLI-XLII, Augustini Opera Omnia, XXI, VIII 2, p721: Portentum ergo fit, non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura
15. ibid: Quomodo est enim contra naturam, quod Dei fit voluntate, cum voluntas tanti utique conditoris conditae cujusque natura sit? (For those who wish to read De Civitate Dei, it is available in translation by John Healey, The City of God, Ed. by R.V.G. Tasker, 2 Vols in Everyman's Library, London 1950; the relevant pages are Vol II, p329)
16. K. Barth, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, Zollikon-Zürich, 1947-1959, II, I, p608; cf. the fine statements of A. Mitchell Hunter, Calvin, London 1957, p57f; Chas Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol III, London 1960, pp615-636.
17. op.cit., p16; again an attractive presentation of a familiar argument.
18. Cf. Morton T. Kelsey, Healing and Christianity, London 1973, p10.
19. The discussion that follows should underline this fact.
20. M. Luther, Works, Vol 24, p368 where he speaks of the signs mentioned in Mk 16.20 (not original to Mark, of course) as substantiating the new message of the apostle; cf. also "for this (ie salvation) one does not need any new signs or miracles."
21. ibid, p371

2. Quoted by M. Kelsey from W.J. Kooiman, By Faith Alone: the Life of Martin Luther, London 1954, p192, a book not available to the writer; the account is given in Luther, Letters of Spiritual Counsel, 1955, pp51f
3. G. Rupp, Martin Luther and the Jews, London 1972, pp12,17
4. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by H. Beveridge, Book IV, XIX, 18, 19
5. Cf. John Dillenberger, M. Luther, Selections, NYork 1961 p456-7; also Joseph Lortz, The Reformation in Germany I, London 1968, p114f
6. D. Guthrie, NT Theology, London 1981 where "healing" does not occur in the index nor is it mentioned under the heading, "Jesus"; G.E. Ladd, A Theology of the NT, London 1974, p536 where he suggest that the gifts of apostleship and prophecy were given for the founding of the church and that possibly the distinctively supernatural gifts belong primarily to the apostolic - a cautious gesture to the dispensational position.
7. R. Anderson, The Silence of God, London 1952, pp153ff
8. For the explanation of "sign" in the Fourth Gospel and the close tie-up of its interpretation to Jesus' self-revelation, see below.
9. Faith and Understanding(ET), London 1966, pp247-261
10. ibid p249
11. ibid
12. ibid, p260
13. Kelsey, op.cit.p233 who assumes no such modification
14. Cf. M. Noth, Exodus, (ET), London 1962, pp155ff where he suggests that 3b-6 is a latter addition and notes the Deuteronomistic flavour of vs5.
15. On this cf. Kelsey, op.cit.p37
16. A. Oepke, art. ἰσχυρὰ in TDNT, Vol III, p201
17. Morris Maddocks, The Christian Healing Ministry, London 1981.
18. Cf. Anton Fridrichsen, The Problem of Miracle in

Primitive Christianity (ET), Minneapolis 1972,  
especially p40

39. The word is  $\sigma\epsilon\lambda\eta\nu\iota\alpha\zeta\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , literally "moon-struck" reflecting the primitive view that the moon had some impact of the health of man; for the early view that the planets who were personified, impressed their own characters on human affairs according to their distinctive nature, cf. F. von Oeffle, on "Sun, Moon and Stars" (Introductory) in Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XII, pp48-62 but especially p49)

40. The verbal identification in the message of John (3.2) with that of Jesus (4.17) has never been satisfactorily explained whether (1) as preacher of the Christian congregation or (2) as evidence of the high esteem in which John was held by the Jewish-Christian congregation of Matthew's day or (3) as indicating a close relationship between the Baptist and Jesus than our sources would indicate or even (4) merely a way of driving home the need for repentance as submission to the reign of God.

41. In TDNT, Vol IV, p1000

42. The verbal identification between Matthew and Luke here is one of the more striking confirmations of the Q source; cf. Siegfried Schulz, Q Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten Zürich 1972, pp190-203.

43. The suggestion of pre-existence for Jesus in the form of address to the Son in Mark (1.1ff) and for this  $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\eta\lambda\theta\omicron\nu$  is suggested by W. Grundmann, Das Evangelium nach Markus, Berlin 1968, ad loc.

44. It is striking the reserve of this verb whether for Jesus or for what he says in the parables. The repetition of the word in the two feedings confirms that it is fixed within the oral tradition as a unique feature of Jesus; Luke, generally regarded as the gentlest of the Gospel writers omits the opportunity to stress this aspect of Jesus in his account of the feeding of the five thousand, the only account he records.

46. Cf. the interesting treatment of "Miracles and Faith" in Fridrichsen, op.cit., pp77-84 which receives some qualifications in this essay.



47. Cf. the disciples' objection, "We prevented him because he was not one of us" is reference to the outsider expelling demons in Jesus' name (Mk 9.38 and par.)
48. op.cit., p78
49. Cf. R. Bultmann, art. πίστις in TDNT, Vol VI
50. Cf. Fridrichsen, op.cit., p78
51. ibid., p79
52. Cf K. Rengstorf, art. δύναμις in TDNT, Vol II
53. United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., The Relation of Christian Faith to Health, 1960, p19
54. ibid., pp37ff
55. There is a thorough treatment of the exorcisms of Jesus and of Jesus as exorcist in Otto Böcher, Christus Exorcista, Berlin 1972 where especially read the sections on the Historic Jesus (166-167) and the exalted Lord (168-170) and exorcism.
56. For an idea of the immense literature on Job, cf. the article in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol II p924 for its bibliography; also Hiobbuch, in Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (RGG), III Band, column 360f
57. R.E. Brown, The Gospel According to John, Vol I, p371 where he suggests the meaning is that God manipulates history to glorify his name.
58. We may note the plural, "What have we to do with you? Have you come to destroy us?"; cf. modern concept of schizophrenia.
59. For a fuller account of the implications of the relationship between the ministry and members of the Medical Profession cf. General Assembly Reports, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1959, pp175ff.
60. Again, cf. The Healing Church, World Council of Churches studies No.3, Geneva 1965.

The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: A Review /1

John Thompson

This is the title of the fourth major book written by Jürgen Moltmann, Professor of Systematic Theology in Tübingen. The other three works are entitled, "The Theology of Hope", dealing with eschatology; "The Crucified God" in which there is a central section on the Trinity in relation to the Cross; and "The Church in the Power of the Spirit", where he also deals briefly with the Trinity.

This present book deals exclusively with the Trinity in relation to God's reign. Moltmann's aim is to develop a doctrine of the Trinity which will be related throughout to the nature and manner of God's kingdom. In doing this at the same time he takes a critical attitude to the views of rule which he assumes underlie other theologies. His aim, like some Anglicans thirty or forty years ago, is to set out what is known as "a social theory of the Trinity" or what he calls also an open Trinity "in relations of fellowship which are open to men and women and are open to the whole world." /2 Again he writes, "The NT talks about God by proclaiming in narrative the relationships of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, which are relationships of fellowship and are open to the world." /3

After a brief introduction Moltmann has five chapters. The first deals with what is called The Passion of God. /4 If God is open to the world he is no apathetic God, that is, one who cannot suffer; this seems to have been the teaching in much traditional thought. Rather he is to be defined as suffering love, a love which both freely and at the same time of necessity suffers by entering into a relationship with another - a world of desperation, of suffering and of death. God as suffering love cannot, by virtue of his very nature, stand aside and see a world unfree, unliberated. He must enter into it.

If then we are to speak of the Trinity we must see God through the Son related to the Father and the Spirit entering into an eternal sacrifice of love, having a

divine sorrow. There is, in a sense, a tragedy in God, suffering which is love.

The second main chapter deals with what is entitled, The History of the Son. /5 It is in and through the Son (through Christology) that we know the triune God and the Trinity. Moltmann in an original way looks at four NT areas in which he finds a trinitarian structure or relationship. These are: the sending of the Son at his baptism for his vocation; the surrender of the Son on the cross; the exaltation of the Son at the resurrection; and the future of the Son at the last. We shall take them in turn: 1. Through his baptism and entry on his vocation the Son helps to bring and proclaim the Father's kingdom and does so by the Holy Spirit. 2. On the cross the Son is abandoned by the Father and gives himself up in self-surrender. The mutual relationship both of the separation and of the union is the Holy Spirit. 3. In the resurrection the Son is raised by the Father and at Pentecost sends the Spirit. The sending of the Spirit means an open Trinity open for unification with believers, with mankind, and with the whole of creation." /6 4. In the future of the Son at the end, according to 1 Cor 15, he surrenders his authority to the Father whose then is the kingdom and the glory and the power for ever and ever. It is in this self-surrender of the Son to the Father that God is glorified. The NT thus reveals a varying pattern of trinitarian relationships; not a static structure but a flexible series of movements.

The next chapter is entitled, The World of the Trinity. /7 It deals with what has traditionally been known as the "appropriations", that is, what is most properly referred to each person in the Trinity - the Father as the Creator, the Son as the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier or Lord. But Moltmann is no traditionalist. Following Jewish speculation he sees creation, not so much as a work external to God, an opera ad extra as a passio ad intra, that is, the Father limits himself for the world. As Moltmann puts it: breathes in so that he might breathe out the world. In other words the Father by self-negation suffers and this enables him to create the world. The world now dwells in God and God in the world, in what is known as panentheism. Similarly, the Son in his coming,



limits himself (kenosis) in love to create free, responsive and responsible creatures. The next chapter is entitled The Mystery of the Trinity, /8 and enters into a dialogue with traditional formulations. It is highly critical of what is believed to be the tendency in much western thought towards Modalism or Semi-Sabellianism. Moltmann believes the traditional emphasis on the unity of God before dealing with the Trinity meant that in the Trinity the three persons were regarded simply as modes of unity and were therefore minimized. The unity of God and his lordship was so over-emphasized that the trinity of relationships, of community, of fellowship was largely lost sight of.

Moltmann goes on at this point to take up the traditional distinction between what is known as the economic and the immanent Trinity. The economic Trinity is God in the economy of salvation as he reveals himself in Jesus Christ by the Spirit; this points back to God as he is himself in Jesus Christ by the Spirit; this points back to God as he is in himself - to the immanent Trinity. Thus the distinctions which are manifest in revelation are true in the very being of God himself. He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Now while Moltmann accepts this, he uses and interprets this distinction in a very particular way of his own. The economy of salvation is not mere revelation but it has a retroactive aspect based on what he believes is a reciprocal relationship between God and the world. In other words God revealed in the world and active in history acts back on God as he is in himself. Moltmann can put it in this way, "the Pain of the Cross determines the inner life of the triune God from eternity to eternity." /9 Again, by the Holy Spirit evoking a response, he "moulds the inner life of the triune God through the joy of liberated creation when it is united with God." /10 Thus at the end God will be all things to all. What he is and does in the world not only embraces but frees it but it, in turn, contributes to him, his glory and his bliss. Moltmann goes so far as to say that it is in and through our liberation to give glory to God that God, involved in his suffering world, is himself liberated to his real self, to bliss and to eternal joy.

In the immanent Trinity the Father is understood not in terms of patriarchal general Lordship but as Father of the Son (in trinitarian, not in monotheistic, i.e., theistic terms). He is "a Father who both begets and bears his Son, is not merely a Father in the male sense. He is a Fatherly Father too. He is no longer defined in unisexual, patriarchal terms but - if we allow the metaphor of language - bisexually or transsexually." /11 Moltmann sees this as a rejection of the traditional ideas of lordly rule associated with older views of God as one and, at the same time, of pantheism - the religion of earlier patriarchy. His argument is, therefore, that only a new trinitarian social conception of God and the proper relationship of the three subjects saves us from these twin dangers.

Moltmann comes closer to traditional formulations in stating the relationships of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to each other. The Father is the origin of the deity and the Father of the Son; the Son comes by eternal generation and the Spirit proceeds from the Father. Moltmann tends to disagree with certain statements of both East and West on the filioque. /12 The West states that the Spirit comes from both Father and Son and receives his personal being from both. The East believes that the Father is the sole source of the Spirit's personal being but that he may come and have this through the Son. Moltmann takes his own particular line by stating that the Spirit receives his deity from the Father and his form or relation or "person" from the Son. Thus when we come to the filioque we can use this term for the form of the Spirit - the Spirit's form comes from the Son - but not his substance, not his being. This is a highly speculative statement.

Since the Trinity is defined largely as a society of persons following the Eastern emphasis, inevitably the question arises: "What is the nature of the unity of the triune God? Traditional theology gives a threefold answer to this. God is one in being, the persons are equal in nature and there is a mutual indwelling known as perichorisis. Moltmann omits completely the first two; this is in line with his speaking repeatedly of "three subjects" /13 sometimes even of "three divine subjects"! But how are

they one? They are related by an at-one-ment, by close association amounting to permeation since person is to be defined as a social quality - a uniting rather than a unity. Moltmann can even speak of the circulation of the divine life and dwells exclusively on the third of the traditional aspects perichoresis. In other words, the unity of the Trinity is "a relational, perichoretically consummated life process." /14 For him, the persons themselves constitute both their difference and their unity.

The final chapter is entitled The Kingdom of Freedom. /15 In this section Moltmann applies his views on the Trinity and community to the social and political realm, to God's reign in freedom, and for it. Throughout his book Moltmann strongly criticizes what he calls monotheism which is in fact traditional theism, believing that this is detrimental to a proper understanding of the Trinity and of lordship. The concept of lordship which theism puts forward is one of domination both political and clerical - instance the papacy. Only a trinitarian view of God supports and creates true freedom in community.

Moltmann takes up Joachim of Fiore's idea of the three kingdoms though he does not follow him slavishly. These are the kingdoms of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In this perspective God's kingdom "takes on particular forms in history corresponding to the unique nature of the trinitarian persons." /16 These kingdoms are not seen as successive historically in a modalistic way as with Joachim, but are intertwined, penetrating in a trinitarian way. The kingdom of the Father is seen in creation and preservation and is open to the future: that of the Son in the liberating lordship of the Crucified and that of the Spirit as bringing in the freedom of the Son. There is, indeed, in Moltmann's view a fourth kingdom - that of glory - perfecting and fulfilling all three others.

This trinitarian doctrine of the kingdom is a theological doctrine of freedom, making us servants of the Father, children of the Son and friends by the Holy Spirit. Again, these are not successive but strata in a graduated scale in the concept of freedom finding



fulfilment in glory.

How is one to react to this latest work of Moltmann? Like his previous writings it is clearly a blend of both biblical interpretation and other ideas. It is good to see this central doctrine once again being made definitive and the concept of community and society being underlined though this is by no means new. Nor is there anything necessarily wrong in beginning with the persons as the East does, provided the unity is properly stated and preserved. An important emphasis also deriving primarily from Eastern Orthodoxy is that on the Trinity in relation to worship and doxology. Again, to think in a trinitarian way is a challenge and to relate all to social and political life is important and right. Indeed in Moltmann's thoughts, as Barth point out when he first read "The Theology of Hope", there is a certain "spiritual force and systematic power."

These laudable aims and achievements are, however, to be considered also in relation to certain assumptions which Moltmann makes and which he quite clearly affirms. They are the following:-

- (a) The strong preference for the Eastern approach and a consequent critical attitude to Western trinitarian views.
- (b) The choice of Jewish and Christian mysticism leading to speculative ideas as an interpretative vehicle for this doctrine. Combined with this, is what Moltmann calls "creative fantasy."
- (c) There is a strain of Hegelianism in the whole idea of reciprocity between God and the world.
- (d) There is a continuing preference for a futurist eschatology which gives a certain thrust to the doctrine in relation to God being only as he is to be at the end.
- (e) The attitude towards tradition; at times properly interpreted, at times under a strict logical analysis which could largely demolish the Trinity especially when criticizing the Western position. Like Bultmann, Moltmann comes to his scriptural exposition with not one pre-understanding but with several unproven assumptions. Indeed these clearly colour the whole interpretation.

#### Estimation of Moltmann's teaching

#### The Nature of God.

The questioning of the idea of apatheia common to recent theology is to be accepted. It is, however, a quite different matter to define God exclusively as suffering love. Moltmann nowhere speaks of that love as holy and righteous love which issues both in grace and judgment. In other words, the "Otherness" of God in relation to man and the world receives little attention. Here, too, the lordship of God as sovereign is misrepresented as autocratic, ungodly.

## 2. The Relation between God and the World

While God is the predominant partner in this relationship and frees man and the world, nevertheless both man and the world react on God to make him eternally what he is. This is seen in two ways: (a) God needs our love to bring him out of suffering to bliss. Our liberation of him becomes his liberation by us - surely an impossible speculation. (b) Or, again, God's action in the world as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the economic Trinity, focussed on the cross and resurrection not only reveals the inner life of God but acts back and determines this inner life, the immanent Trinity. But how far can one receive salvation from One who in some way needs to be rescued by us, whose own external action in the world determines his eternal being and eternal bliss?

## 3. Eschatology

While this has been slightly modified, its continuing influence is seen in his doctrine of the Trinity. For example, he speaks of the economic Trinity, completing and perfecting itself to the immanent Trinity. It is only really at the end that God will be all things to all. In other words, the triune God is only what he is to be at the end. This comes dangerously near saying, if it does not actually say, that the triune God is not completely God until the eschaton. Moltmann therefore cannot say with Rahner /19 that the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity and vice versa, or with many other theologians, that the economic Trinity reveals the immanent Trinity. A serious qualification is thus introduced here which in fact denies the truth of this close correspondence or identity between God in himself and his action in the world.

#### 1. The Use of Scripture

Two main points can be mentioned here. Moltmann has been quite rightly criticized for his view of the cross as a separation between the Father and the Son. /20 Even though he attempts to bring the two together both in separation and in unity by the Holy Spirit one can scarcely accept this as being an adequate answer. In fact Moltmann can only have this view of Father and Son being completely separated on the cross and because of it, on the basis of his idea that the unity of the Father and the Son is a unity of wills. Therefore clearly the unity of being which one saw earlier in traditional thinking is not emphasized. Again, it is strange that Moltmann does not go back to the NT tradition as he did in his first book but rather goes to the speculative ideas of Jewish mysticism. He seems, therefore, to have had a prior conception of what creation and redemption mean and goes in search of views which support this rather than developing his views on the basis of the biblical revelation. Are there not other ways in which a threefold pattern is seen in the NT relating God, Christ and Spirit which Moltmann does not even mention?

#### 2. Speculative Aspects

There is a considerable amount of pure speculation in certain of his interpretations. For example, he sees the creation of the world by the Father as the result of a form of kenosis, of consequent pain in God and with a world in God as anentheism. This is something which is itself simply speculative and non-biblical. It leads to further speculation about how each person reacts to the exercise. The Father creates through his love for the Son and by a contraction of the Spirit. But where does one find such a view? It is simply speculation. Again no theology of my knowledge makes the distinction between the Father as the source of the essence of the Spirit in his being as divine, and the Son as the source of his form. The distinction between essence and form is another speculation in favour of disproving the Western filioque. With these speculative approaches Moltmann combines at times a form of intuition which he calls "creative fantasy" and at other time he uses, as we have seen, a relentless logic to demolish the Western trinitarian view. But all doctrines of the Trinity



would disappear if this method were applied to them.

## 6. His Relation to Tradition

Here Moltmann is highly selective - at times offering little more than a caricature. He is very dismissive of the Western tradition from Augustine through Aquinas to Rahner and Barth as simply semi-Sabellian. To label Barth and Rahner as primarily influenced by idealistic philosophy is a quite extraordinary misreading of their views. Again, while it is laudable to criticize views of lordship which are autocratic, to make the kingdom of God simply one of love without the righteousness and holiness of God included would seem to be less than true. Moltmann speaks in the introduction to this book of writing in the light of the East/West debate on the filioque and contributing to this. /21 He has, however, failed to mention the considerable consensus between Eastern and Western theology summarized by T.F. Torrance /22 in an article pointing to a fair measure of agreement between Roman Catholics and Protestants and between both and the East. This would have been contrary to his own thesis; at any rate it is not even mentioned.

## 7. The Social Trinity

Moltmann is aware of the danger of Tritheism in his speaking of the three divine subjects. He counters this by arguing that no one has ever written a theology of tritheism. /23 No one has ever mentioned or given proof of any. This is clever but unconvincing for the dangers are there all the same. The social, the threeness, the community are so strongly emphasized that one really questions whether one is dealing with the one God or whether in the conception of three divine subjects there are not certainly tritheistic tendencies.

Moltmann's central thesis on the trinity and history of God on the cross, as he calls it, has been rightly criticized. /24 The basis of this is too great an emphasis on the threeness and too little on the unity. In fact the unity of God is something that cannot really be maintained on the basis of his starting point and exposition. But, if God is the triune God, three in one, and one in three, can one really affirm each if some other unity is offered than a oneness in three? Moltmann

akes what Dietrich Ritschl points out is a "category mistake", /25, that is, speaks often of the Trinity, of the doctrine, as if he was speaking of the triune God - a point Torrance also makes against Rahner in his book on the Trinity. /26 This shows a lack of clear perception of the important distinction between God as the triune God and the doctrine of the Trinity - and the two are not the same. Finally, Moltmann's views tend towards universalism; he does not even discuss the possibility of unbelief and there is very little about sin. He simply seems to assume that all will be one day in God and God will be all in all in a glorious panentheism. But this is scarcely biblical teaching.

#### Notes

1. Jürgen Moltmann, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, The Doctrine of God, (ET), London 1981

2. Ibid., 10

3. Ibid., 64

4. Ibid., 21-60

5. Ibid., 61-96

6. Ibid., 90

7. Ibid., 97-128

8. Ibid., 129-190

9. Ibid., 161

10. Ibid

11. Ibid., 164

12. Filioque means "and from the Son". This states that in the inner life of God, the Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son (Filioque). This phrase is accepted by the West but rejected by the Orthodox East on the ground that it was added unilaterally to the Nicaeo-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) by the West at a later date and also for that reason has not the authority of an Ecumenical Council. The Latin West has defended its addition on the grounds that since God is as he reveals himself, the Holy Spirit comes from Christ in the temporal Mission and therefore does so eternally.

13. See e.g., op.cit. p156

14. Ibid., 175

15. Ibid., 191-222

16. Ibid., 204

17. Karl Barth, Letters 1961-68 (ET), Edinburgh, 1981, p175
18. Moltmann, op.cit., p xiii
19. Karl Rahner, The Trinity (ET), London 1977<sup>2</sup>, p22
20. Cf. Diskussion über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch 'Der gekreuzigte Gott!' Ed.M.Walker, Munich 1979m espec. H.H. Miskotte "Das Leiden ist in Gott, Ueber Jürgen Moltmanns Trinitarische Kreuzestheologie", pp74-93
21. Moltmann, op.cit., p xv
22. T.F. Torrance, Towards an Ecumenical Consensus on the Trinity, TZ, Vol 31, No.6, 1975, p337
23. Moltmann, op.cit., p144
24. Cf. Miskotte, op.cit., pp74ff
25. Dietrich Ritschl, Der vier Reiche der "drei göttlichen Subjekte." Bemerkungen zu Jürgen Moltmanns Trinitätslehre, EvTh, Vol 41, No.5, 1981, p470
26. Torrance, op.cit., pp338ff



John Goldingay, Approaches to Old Testament Interpretation,  
IVPress, pp155 £4.25

This book by John Goldingay (who is Registrar and Lecturer in OT in St. John's College, Nottingham) is the fifth in the IVP series, "Issues in Contemporary Theology." With its meticulous and careful scholarship and its clarity of presentation it will undoubtedly prove to be invaluable background material for teachers and preachers, as well as a useful introductory textbook for theological students.

In the words of the author the book is "not so much to propound a particular approach to interpreting the OT as to survey the various approaches that have jostled with each other in the world of western scholarship over the past twenty or thirty years"(p11).

Goldingay categorizes the various possible approaches to OT interpretation under five headings with a chapter devoted to each. These are the OT (1) as a faith (including discussion of what constitutes an OT theology); (2) as a way of life (tackling the vexed question of how the OT laws and injunctions relates to twentieth-century Christianity); (3) as the story of salvation (including an analysis of the concept of salvation-history); (4) as witness to Christ (much of the chapter devoted to an investigation of typology and allegory); and (5) as Scripture (largely a discussion of the development of the OT canon and the implications of this for OT interpretation).

A number of themes struck me as particularly well elucidated. For example, in chapter one there is a most helpful discussion on the distinction between an OT theology and a History of Israelite Religion, and on the related question as to what extent an OT theology should prescribe what should be believed in OT times. In chapter 3, there is developed an interesting question on how an emphasis on God's acts in history relate to God's words, and on whether revelation is primarily to be located in history or in word. Not unrelated to this is what I found to be one of the most illuminating sections of the book, that is the section of chapter 4 which perceptively tackles the distinction between typology and allegory. Goldingay questions the validity of several of the common distinctions drawn between the two, and comes to the interesting conclusion that "the

distinction between typology and allegory is to see the former as an approach to theology and the latter as an approach to interpretation. Typology, that is, studies events, while allegory is a method of interpreting words" (p107).

While Goldingay writes as an avowed conservative evangelical, he gives a fair hearing to opinion and scholarship from all schools of thought; and indeed his book serves as a valuable synthesis of much that has been written about the OT in recent years from all points of view.

One of the aims of the whole series is not just to provide the preacher or theological student with a valuable tool, but also to provide Christians in general with a succinct guide to theological thinking. However, the present book seems to me too technical and detailed for all but the most determined of laymen - though in a brief survey of this kind it is difficult to see how the simplicity and attractiveness of presentation necessary to hold the layman's interest could be achieved without detracting greatly from the value of the book for the serious student.

In places Goldingay does rather arouse the reader's expectations by asking searching questions to which, in the end, there can be no definitive answers. This is especially so in chapter 2, dealing with the applicability of OT legal material to our contemporary situation, an area where it is so much easier to raise questions than to offer answers! However, in the last analysis, it must be said that one of the main virtues of the present book is that it does not seek to peddle any one set of answers to any of the problems of OT interpretation but to survey the various possible approaches. In the author's own words: "Understanding the OT resembles....appreciating a landscape rather than understanding the layout of an architect-planned new town. We can appreciate a landscape by starting from its roads, its contours, or its water supplies, or by taking as its centre a hill, a Church, an inn, or a bus-stop.....similarly, many starting-points, structures and foci can illuminate the landscape" (p28f).

David John Lull, The Spirit in Galatia, Paul's Interpretation of Pneuma as divine power. Missoula 1980 1-xiii, 240 np

This study, it is not too much to say, is dominated by the hermeneutic known as "process theology". It determines the way in which the biblical material is handled, the terms that are used, even the very choice of Galatians as a convenient subject for such an approach. It claims to be "an internal analysis of Paul's statements about the Spirit in the letter to the Galatians". It does not deal with any possibility of developments in Paul's view of the Spirit (though it may be doubted if there is any) nor does it ask about background, e.g., to the use of pneuma. The writer admits that the thesis represents a first step, and claims that such concentration on Galatians is an advantage for "Paul's statements about the Spirit in Galatians are understood.....in their origin in Christian experience in the Galatian churches and in Paul's polemic with his opponents in Galatia." (p.x). It is also an advantage in his view from a hermeneutical standpoint since he can single out the concrete event which set up the church in Galatia and it is this especially since his hermeneutic is that of "process thought" where events are primary. Finally he seeks to relate Paul's thought to contemporary thought as represented by existentialism (Bultmann) and Process Theology (W. Norman Pittenger and Walfhart Pennenburg).

In an article on "Process Theology" (Dictionary of Christian Theology, Ed. Alan Richardson, London 1969), Pittenger writes, "The concern for the dynamics of the physical universe and of human personality, the social nature of man and his organic relation to the universe in which he lives, have led process theologians to assert that it is in 'events', rather than in 'things'; in action or activity, rather than in 'substances'; in creation as a continuing process rather than in creation as a finished product, that we may best interpret the order of nature and human life." Such theologians see man as "becoming". They find their criterion in the text "God is love", to be understood in the light of the event of Jesus Christ in whom (for Christian faith) the Love "which moves the sun and other stars" was vividly "enfleshed".



Thus the writer concentrates on the "event" which constituted the Galatian church. It is in "events" that God in his continuous creation is active, but through the particular mode of the Spirit. The action of the Spirit descending on the Galatians as they respond to the proclamation in faith, and continuing within their process of "becoming", lends itself readily to process concepts. Though many commentators accept a close link between baptism and the bestowal of the Spirit, this is rejected perhaps because it does not fit into a particular view of the "process". The Biblical Theologian would seek to link up what Paul says with his statements in other writings. He would assume that by this time Paul had worked out most parts of his theological understanding of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and that it would be a distortion to take Galatians on its own, since it is only an occasional letter addressed to specific circumstances and shaped in relation to those circumstances. Lull, as process theologian, prefers to take the "event" which lay at the foundation of the Galatian church, their ecstatic reception of the Holy Spirit and its ecstatic cry "Abba, Father".

It is interesting to note how this concentration on Galatians affects the construction. There is little or no mention of the Resurrection or of the Risen Lord (The only verb used is egeirō and only in 1.1; anistēmi and anastasis do not occur in Galatians). We get Christ spoken of in the combination "Christ and Spirit" so frequently - the reviewer has counted no less than twenty occasions that the distinctiveness of Christ over against the Spirit is blurred. The form of expression which we find in Paul does not ever appear to be "Christ and Spirit" but we do get links like "The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus..." (Rom.8.2) or the Spirit paralleled to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor.13.13; cf. 1 Cor. 12.4-6). We have seen that the text of the process theologians is "God is love", understood in the light of the event of Jesus Christ. Lull links together the placarding of Jesus Christ crucified and the reception of the Spirit associated in Gal 3.1,2, so closely that the resurrection which was of such vital importance of Paul and to the Church falls into the background and the combi

ation "Christ (i.e., crucified=event) and Spirit" (= process and , in Galatians, event) emerges. Galatians deals with the contrast of "flesh" and "spirit" extensively (5.16-6.10). Lull regards the view of "flesh" here as an earlier view of Paul where he conceives of it as the power behind evil whereas later "sin" e.g., in Romans, becomes the power behind evil. But is this probable? The OT concept of "flesh" (basar) saw it as essentially weak and frail but with Paul it is taken over by sin and thus assumes its sinister aspect and usually in contexts where the contrast "flesh" and "spirit" is maintained. Is it not more likely that Paul has already worked out his view of sin by the time he wrote Galatians? How otherwise do we interpret convincingly his view of "flesh" here? Does the mere omission of the sinister sense of "flesh" in Philippians to be interpreted that Paul at this time had no view of "flesh" as a sinister force?

How far Paul makes the Spirit a person in Galatians is called into question by some scholars, e.g., Bultmann can explain the Spirit merely in terms of a new "self-understanding"? Lull does not go as far as this but the influence of of process thought is especially evident in the types of expressions he uses to describe the "Spirit". He speaks of an "it" and not a "he", that Paul probably thought of the Spirit as a fluidum (p197), "a discrete entity", "a historical entity", "a mode of the presence of God in history". The Spirit tends to be identified with the eternal Spirit in whom everyone lives and in which, with the whole cosmos, everyone has their own creative ground. Lull, however, resists this on the grounds that the historical event of the death of Christ "calls forth sustained attention to the love of God which is present in the Spirit", and that, therefore, the Spirit can be spoken of "as a particular, but not an exclusive, mode of God's being-in-the-world" (p200).

The book is an intriguing attempt to apply a specific hermeneutic from modern philosophy of religion to an ancient letter, trying to deal seriously with the terms in which it speaks and to make more cogent its appeal to the intellectual. It invites further experimentation along this line and against a wider spectrum. We should not ignore too some of the splendid examples of carefully worked out exegesis



on more traditional lines in Part II, "The Historicality of the Spirit".

Union Theological College  
Belfast

E.A. Russell

A.M. Hunter, Christ and the Kingdom,

St. Andrew's Press, Edinburgh pp110 £1.95

We are indebted yet again to Professor A.M. Hunter for serving up meaty biblical material in a popular, readable form for both student and interested layman. Although entitled "Christ and the Kingdom", it is really a pocket theology of the NT, a study in synopsis and concentration, the NT in microcosm. The paramount theme is the Kingdom, with God as Father, a divine rule which produces the life-style of the Beatitudes. All the parables, to a degree, more or less, point up the kingdom's nature. Indeed the kingdom is Christ Himself, not just its founder but its embodiment.

In a work of such concentration, crispness and clarity are called for and both are present. There is no unnecessary padding. Corollaries 1 to 5 indicate God's fatherly rule while points 1 to 5 clarify important truths about the parables. Hunter's use of biblical pictures drives the truth home and this is particularly so regarding Christ's understanding of his own death. Here four metaphors are noted: a baptism he must undergo, a cup of suffering establishing a new covenant, a road he must travel and a price he must pay (p45). Equally graphic is the author's description of Christ's death as seen by the chief apostolic witnesses: Peter's Servant of God, Paul's mercy-seat victim, John's Lamb of God and the merciful high priest of the epistle to the Hebrews (pp47-48).

Other illustrations make for pleasureable reading, e.g., the modern parallel to the parable of the Hidden Treasure in two Arab lads who happened upon the Dead Sea Scrolls



in 1947 (p35). Apt quotations throughout indicate the author's extensive reading, ending in a climactical quotation from Albert Schweitzer on the experiential knowledge of Christ (p104). The book is spiced with a most pleasant humour, e.g., the human father who, far from killing the fatted calf, nearly killed the prodigal son (p38), or the dour Scot's comment on a young modern preacher's eschatology who portrayed a God "who widna fricht the craws, a kind o' thowless Great First Cause, Skinklin through vapour." (p81). Professor Hunter uses his extensive knowledge of NT to communicate effectively. The reviewer could have wished he had been a little less harsh on penal substitution, a bit less mythological on the Ascension and somewhat stronger on eternal punishment. This pleasant, most readable overview of what the NT teaches is well worth £1.95 any day.

Trinity Manse,  
Ahoghill

R.E.H. Uprichard

John P. Balchin, Let the Bible speak,  
IVPress, pp 96, £1.25

John F. Balchin's book, "Let the Bible Speak" is an exercise in information and clarification about "Hermeneutics" - the study of interpreting the Bible. The question, "What has 'hermeneutics' got to do with me?" is given a typically direct and practical answer. He pictures Paul and Jane arguing about having a drink with non-Christian friends as an opportunity of witness with both quoting scripture to support their differing opinions. Or again, John informs Pauline, his girl-friend that he has a word from the Lord to the effect that it would be all right if they slept together. But Pauline questions the rightness of this, while also believing in "direct revelation." (p6)

The author gives us a review of biblical interpretation down the history of the church, including the Alexandrian and medieval schools of thought, with their obscure, hidden

meaning and the contrast of the literal emphasis of the Reformers, stereotyped "confessional" statements and the emotional subjective approach of the Pietists. Liberalism hardly takes the authority of scripture seriously enough and the recipe for true interpretation seems to lie in a literal stance, a stance which does not ignore context, literary genre and the principles of application of the writings.

Balchin structures his thought on an analogy of the written word with the incarnate Word. He recognizes freely the humanness of scripture, with its various literary styles and cultures, its symbolic and propositional character. But such humanness does not detract from its "divinity" and biblical "inspiration" is of a completely different nature from that used to describe other literature. It is not a result of human achievement but of divine revelation. Thus Jesus viewed it and within the NT revelation, the same attitude emerges. To ask, "Is it inerrant?" is to pose the wrong kind of question, just as to polarize the Bible with science is to miss the vital point.

But Balchin's major contention is that the Bible does speak, and therein lies the secret of hermeneutics. It speaks and it speaks to me. It is dialectical by nature - it questions, answers and discusses its thesis with itself. For this reason I must above all listen and, protected from a naive subjectivity and guided by the Spirit's inner testimony, I must find the principles rather than the rules of scripture and apply these to my situation. I suppose all this has been already said but the author's distinctive contribution is in his chatty but incisive mode of communication. The "Rose of Sharon" choruses will never sound the same to many, for the girl in the Song of Songs by this description merely emphasizes her own ordinariness among other maidens. (p40) Pharisaic righteousness will have a fresh orientation for me for I begin to see the revolutionary nature of Jesus' criticisms of it. (p87). Thus Balchin answers the questions he poses in a relevant and practical application of scriptural principles, using the best tools of modern scholarship.

R.E.H. Uprichard.